

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

To Improve the Academy

Professional and Organizational Development
Network in Higher Education

1983

Workshop on Course Design and Teaching Styles: A Model for Faculty Development

Nancy Nowik

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/podimproveacad>



Part of the [Higher Education Administration Commons](#)

Nowik, Nancy, "Workshop on Course Design and Teaching Styles: A Model for Faculty Development" (1983). *To Improve the Academy*. 37.

<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/podimproveacad/37>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Professional and Organizational Development Network in Higher Education at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in To Improve the Academy by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

Workshop on Course Design and Teaching Styles: A Model for Faculty Development

Nancy Nowik

Denison University

The Great Lakes Colleges Association's (GLCA's) annual workshop on Course Design And Teaching Styles has been offered now for seven years. The workshop offers faculty the chance for renewing the teaching spirit while designing or redesigning a course. It is one of the most successful faculty development offerings of the Consortium, and we attribute its success to several factors: its small size (usually no more than twenty-four participants), its length (five or six days), its clear focus (designing one course while working on improving teaching styles and strategies), its inquiries into educational philosophy, and its dedicated staff. As one of those staff members, I attempt here to describe in some detail how the workshop is structured and how the components of the workshop most applicable to the various needs of people in faculty development might be duplicated.

We recruit among the twelve member colleges of the GLCA and schools of about our size with similar missions and needs — small liberal arts colleges of the Midwest. Some people come because they are suffering from declining enrollments or overwork or the need to retool. Some come because they are new teachers who need ideas, guidance, collegiality. Some participants are those people so bent on self-improvement that they are inveterate workshop goers. All seem grateful that their institutions have purchased time for them — time to work on a course in the month of June, when the school year is over

and the summer lies ahead for additional reflection and work on courses. In addition to offering the workshop for the GLCA each June, we have given variants of it for the School of the Ozarks, the Maryland Independent colleges and Universities Association (MICUA), and the Central Pennsylvania Consortium (CPC).

The brochure used to advertise the workshop describes it in the following way:

Participants are asked to bring syllabi, exams and assignments, notes for lectures and labs, class handouts, tests, or other teaching materials to use as they plan a specific course they will be teaching during the next school year. The six-day workshop provides sufficient time for substantive work, and participants leave the workshop with at least the beginnings of a thoroughly planned syllabus and often with a fully developed course outline.

In formal presentations and informal group discussions, participants rethink their goals and restructure their classes. Past workshop sessions have dealt with such issues as recognizing student needs, using the first day of class more effectively, taking stock at midterm, and appraising teaching effectiveness.

Considerable time is allotted for consultation with experienced staff members and for individual work on courses. The schedule allows time for recreation in the late afternoon.

Past participants have welcomed the workshop because it provides an unusual opportunity for both renewal of the teaching process and fresh perspectives on a career in college teaching.

Participants arrive in late afternoon on Sunday, but staff assembles a day earlier. Five of us have worked together all seven years now; we add at least one new staff member each year and usually have a total of eight teaching staff, plus the GLCA vice-president who administers workshop logistics. We tentatively divide the participants into workgroups of five or six, with two staff members assigned to each group. We talk about which staff members should be paired this year — to get balance and to provide variety.

We create faculty work groups with an eye to mixture — we mix up the disciplines, see that people from the same school are not in the same groups, distribute the women participants among the groups.

(We will make last-minute adjustments on Monday, after we've met the participants and found early impressions of personality styles.)

We'll spend that Saturday planning the evening sessions, that part of the workshop which alters most from year to year and is most criticized by the workshop goers, the part that we use to challenge us and/or to represent our current interests, for example, a session on gender differences in teaching. We might also talk that first day about the participants we know personally — discuss what we think they'll want and expect from the week's work.

The design of the workshop mirrors the design of a typical college course. In microteaching sessions the participant-as-teacher will be encouraged to both lecture and lead discussions and to experiment with strategies never tried before — and to see six or eight other people doing the same thing. Further, throughout the week the participant-as-student is put into a variety of learning situations: taking notes at a lecture, participating in discussions, playing games, brainstorming, having homework assignments, doing simulations, taking a learning styles inventory, using various audio-visual aids. In other words, we are consciously modelling during the workshop the design and management of an effective course. The week is a course which goes from pretesting and getting acquainted through various exercises, presentations, assignments, conferences, mid-week (term) evaluations and end of week (term) evaluations.

The Course Of The Week

As people are arriving late Sunday afternoon, we provide name tags and have a wine-and-beer reception. The workshop begins formally after dinner, at about 7:30. We present the goals of the workshop on newsprint:

1. We will work through a variety of course development stages.
2. We will explore and experiment with several learning and teaching styles and strategies.

We provide a general overview of the week's schedule and major activities. Then we work on introductions. We mix staff and participants, and all talk in pairs for about ten minutes, taking notes on what we learn, then introducing our partner to the group. The introductions

might take as long as 40 minutes. We try to include information on something in the past school year that has excited the participant, either in research or teaching.

Then one of the staff provides an overview on course design which includes goals for teachers as they design or re-design a course:

- 1) gather as much information as possible, and
- 2) begin to expand your view of what is possible.

They are then asked to begin to defend their course and why it ought to be taught, to think about and identify 1) the subject matter they want to cover; 2) student priorities and anticipation; 3) community needs; and 4) school and department priorities.

At about 9:30 the staff provides a party. In one workshop variant we have found successful, staff has divided the participants into teams before they arrive — groups that create a different meld than that of the work groups or roommates. Each of these teams is given an envelope containing \$20-\$30. Each team is responsible for providing a party one of the evenings. The staff party is deliberately uncreative in its food offerings: dip, chips, beer wine. We've had Make Your Own Won-Ton Nights, pizzas, German food-drink-and-song evenings, a Pina Colada South of the Border Night, a staff roast, and so forth. We've even learned Dakota Sioux dances and African folk songs at these events.

That same evening (Sunday) we ask people to begin signing up if they are interested in arranging for or simply attending optional special interest group sessions. Last year we got responses on: the Keller Plan, writing across the curriculum, general education reforms, writing comments on student papers, and the lecture — suggestions and variations. The groups meet over meals or during free time, often coming up with helpful handouts for the entire workshop.

Course Development Stages

The first hour Monday morning is spent defending the course the participant intends to work on for the week. We divide the people into trios, and paired trios will form the microteaching groups that commence on Tuesday, so the people in the trios are learning about one another and their courses and gaining some familiarity and trust that

will prove fruitful later. Each person, taking about twenty minutes, gives to the other two his or her responses to the following while those two play devil's advocate and the staff circulates: Describe your course. Should this course be taught? Why is it important to teach? Who says it's important? What are the levels of commitment (yours, your department's, the college's, others')? What and how does it contribute to the college curriculum?

In the end, all members of the trio get practice in both asking and responding to challenging questions (but all three must repeatedly be careful not to offer solutions). After this exercise, a few may have decided not to work on that course; they realize that their original commitment was minimal, perhaps, and they choose another course to work on for the week.

After a coffee break, the entire group meets to consider the resources they and their students might use in the course they are planning. We choose a general education course to serve as an example. The last few times we've done this brainstorming session, for instance, it has been led by Julie Jeffrey, historian at Goucher in Baltimore. She sets the scene by describing her American History course and her access to Washington, D.C. Participants at last year's workshop listed the following resources she and her students might turn to: The Smithsonian, county histories, the college archives, local historical photos, cookbooks and menus, societies and historic preservation groups, city and port records, survey records, relevant local people and events, the National Creative Anachronism organization. The point is for participants to see that often they have all kinds of unconsidered sources at their disposal, resources they've not yet considered tapping as they create their objectives for the course.

After this exercise, another staff member leads us through a similar exercise called Creating the Dream List. He or she asks us to fantasize a course in which we are free of all restraints and constraints — time, money, level of student competence, departmental restrictions. We list our objectives in that course as if all things were possible. Usually we have limited ourselves even before we begin, and the point is that we must throw off our restraints and plan with an open mind.

After this (fifteen-minute) modelling of how to think through a dream list, the participants are sent off to lunch and to free time —

time to work on their own dream lists. Later, back in their trios, people share what they've created. Now the participants get practice asking supportive and encouraging questions rather than playing the skeptic.

It's extremely interesting to ask alums what they remember best from the course design segment of the workshop. When I asked recently, several people mentioned the Dream List first. That notion of considering a limitless number of objectives, opening oneself up — if only in a fantasy — to limitless possibilities, stays with people as they plan courses. Furthermore, people often discover how to fit in much, if not all, of what appeared on their dream lists.

When a staff member meets next with the participants, it's to help them to begin to pare down the list we'd originally insisted they create with abandon. We're led through a brief fantasy exercise in which a student meets you five or ten years hence and says, "I have remembered you all these years and have been grateful all this time because you taught me ..." Here each participant fills in the blank by thinking what they'd best like to be remembered for. Participants last year called out responses such as the self-confidence, to appreciate the humanities, that learning can be fun, to continue to do X, to appreciate other people and cultures, to speak in front of groups.

As people contemplate their own central goal for their course, they ask themselves whether it bears any relationship to their dream list of objectives. If not, then objectives and what they want students to get from their courses are not meshing, and they need to rethink one or both.

Next, the staff member continues the process of paring down (and fitting in) by writing on newsprint the title and objectives of one of his or her own courses, perhaps the course used in the morning.

Then, using all of the audience, we distinguish between what we learn to be core and non-essential objectives and activities. The exercise enables participants to assign priorities to their own dream lists as they decide what is core and what is optional, what pre-requisites (especially remedial elements) might be handled outside the classroom to increase the effective use of in-class time. The teachers decide which of their many objectives might be exemptions and alternatives for some students. Most important, they are deciding what is pervasive, necessary, "core". We are trying to make them review

continually their assumptions about what is possible in the classroom, to expand the boundaries of the possible while never losing sight of what is essential.

Later in the week (Tuesday or Wednesday), in a third segment on course development, one of us demonstrates what we call sequencing — a way of defining a broad sequence of content through diagramming or flow-charting. The staff member has the participants chart their courses to incorporate sequence and alternative strategies. They are now using all the Course Design elements offered them since Sunday night as they work through pretest, core, remedial, exemptions, options, pervasive elements. And people now formally and informally are meeting with staff for private consulting on their dream lists, sequences, and diagrams.

The fourth course design component deals with Output of Production. Each person is asked to prepare each 'unit' for the classroom in detail by moving through the following stages: **SELECT A UNIT**, perhaps the initial unit or an unsuccessful unit. Next, **DESCRIBE THE LEARNERS**. For example, consider their class, major, entering skills, attitudes, knowledge, needs, abilities, and interest. Next, **FORMULATE OBJECTIVES**, specific and unambiguous. And then we are to **IDENTIFY INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES**, both human and non-human.

Most participants get no further during the workshop, but as time allows, they will make **DETAILED PREPARATIONS** of all aspects of the unit, i.e. lectures, discussion session formats, instructional materials, diagnostic tests, logistics, student manual or guidelines, commercial materials and texts, space and facilities, grading procedures, and course or unit evaluation.

The production is followed by the final stages: **TEACH THE UNIT**, pretesting anything that is possible. Then **EVALUATE THE UNIT**, in terms of student learning and formative evaluation. Finally, **REVISE THE UNIT**. During the workshop, participants may teach one or more small parts of the unit in a microteaching session.

Schedule

What is presented here is our current five-day model (but we have done the workshop in varying lengths and with varying numbers of participants — the trios must become quartets at times, for example). A series of mini-workshops are integrated into this model: Kolb's learning styles or using the first day of class more effectively or student stages of development. These topics change, are variables we are still experimenting with each time we give the workshop. A typical schedule might run as follows:

Course Design and Teaching Styles Workshop 5-Day Model Schedule

(varies from 4 to 6 days)

Sunday Evening through Friday Noon

Sunday

- Arrive in late afternoon, check into rooms
- 5:00 Wine reception
- 6:00 Dinner
- 7:30 Opening - Introductions/Expectations sharing and discussion of
 - pre-test
 - Overview of workshop
 - Overview of Course Design Stages
- 9:00 Party given by staff

Monday

- 7:45 Breakfast
- 8:45 Course Preparation (I)
 - Trios or quartets - "Defend your course."
 - Coffee
 - Brainstorm content *Resources*
 - Trios or quartets - "Triple your list of resources."
 - Create the *Ideal* - a "Dream list" (fantasy)
- 11:30 Individual work time on Dream list
- 12:30 Lunch

- 1:30** Ultimate goals - a fantasy on long-term impact
Course Design (II)
Priorities
- 2:30** Individual work and free time
Consultation available
- 6:00** Dinner
- 7:15** Learning Styles Mini-Workshops (Kolb materials)
Introduction to "First Day" assignment for Tuesday
- 9:00** Participants give party

Tuesday

- 7:45** Breakfast
- 8:45-** "First Day" presentations in teaching workgroups of 6-8
- 12:00**
- 12:30** Lunch
- 1:30** Sequencing and diagramming the course
- 2:30** Individual Work and free time
Consultation
- 5:00** B.Y.O. Party
- 6:00** Dinner
- 7:15** Mini-workshop: "Involving Students in the Classroom" - play the "Mystery Game" and brainstorm involvement strategies in game groups
- 9:15** Participants give party

Wednesday

- 7:45** Breakfast
- 8:45** Teaching workshops with videotaped presentations
- 12:30** Lunch — begin mid-course feedback interviews
Afternoon: Individual work and free time, consultation
- 6:00** Dinner
- 7:15** Report on mid-course feedback, review and revise schedule, announce optional sessions
- 7:45** Course Preparation (IV)-Production - prepare a unit
- 8:00** Stages of student development (Perry)
- 9:00** Participants give party

Thursday

- 7:45 Breakfast
- 8:45 Teaching work groups — video microteaching continues
- 12:00 Discuss Friday assignment: presentation of course design
- 12:30 Lunch — optional round-table discussions on special topics
- Afternoon: Individual work and free time
- Consultation
- 6:00 Dinner
- 7:15 Personal and Professional Commitments — small group discussions?
- 8:30 Last night party planned by participants

Friday

- 7:45 Breakfast
- 8:45 Course Design Presentations in trios or quartets
- 10:30 Testing and grading mini-workshop
- 11:30 Workshop evaluation
- Re-entry issues - role playing
- 12:30 Lunch and good-bye

As the workshop schedule indicates, these sessions on course design are offered in the first two to three days, each session building on the work participants have been doing on their individual courses. By the end of the second day, intermeshing with those presentations, are preparations for microteaching, and then, beginning Tuesday morning, the microteaching sessions themselves.

Microteaching

Microteaching is a term coined at Stanford in 1963 describe a teacher training exercise, a scaled-down teaching situation that nevertheless is representative of one's classroom performance. At our workshop a five-to-seven minute segment is taught by each participant, with the other members of the group responding as students. People are in groups of six to seven, ideally including two staff members per group. Sometimes the segments are videotaped. The teacher is encouraged to ask for reactions to a certain aspect of his or

her teaching, and the group responds, using certain criteria for giving feedback.

In our workshops, recognizing how threatening microteaching is at first for many, we don't begin it until Tuesday. By then people are beginning to know each other and have at least worked repeatedly in their trios. To reduce anxiety and save time further, we don't use the video cameras that first time the groups come together. On Monday evening we have presented the group with "Guidelines for Giving Constructive Feedback," and we have asked them to prepare a 5-7 minute segment from the first day of an upcoming course (in most cases they'll choose the course they are working on during the week). We urge them to feel free to select their segment from any portion of that first-day class they feel most comfortable with. Some will describe the goals and mechanics of the course; others will begin with the substantive content and themes of the course; still others will introduce themselves and the students to each other. Some will lecture; others will engage students' participation immediately. We reinforce the notion that there are many different effective ways to begin, and we highlight what concerns most students bring to the first day.

On Tuesday, then we have them teach from the First Day (without video). For Wednesday morning, we suggest a slice of a class from anywhere in the course, but perhaps continuing building on the First Day. On Thursday, the participant might want to try discussion, somehow involving students and again building on the ideas and themes of the course they have introduced earlier. Some will want to re-teach a segment done earlier in the week. If they have no ideas, we push them to do something very experimental.

One of the things we've consistently been praised for as a staff is how we blur the distinctions between staff and participants as the week proceeds. In some ways that lack of distinction-making comes effortlessly since we are just like them, college teachers who receive end-of-term evaluations, who sometimes suffer fatigue and lack of direction, who use what spare time we have during the week to work on one of our own courses, who arrange for "sessions" with each other if there's a free slot.

In another sense, however, especially once we're into our microteaching groups, we ARE staff, and it is in those groups that I work

hardest and give and gain the most. We've gone over the Guidelines for Constructive Feedback sheet in the large group, but from the first time the small group meets, staff must begin modelling. Those first times participants teach for the group, it will probably be the staff member(s) who speak first — who lift the energy level, who ease the tension, who offer praise and — and here it gets harder — who set the tone for the phrasing of the responses.

We must be asking ourselves constantly what is useful to this participant and what is not. We want the strong to get as much as possible in the way of feedback (and many will want suggestions as well, although we insist that they have to ask for suggestions since otherwise everyone falls far too easily into overloading the performer with, "Well, what I do is ...") We want the more fragile participant to get some praise, of course, to increase self-confidence (though sometimes I think our compliments, our enthusiasm about what was good in their teaching segments, don't bolster self-confidence nearly as much as their seeing their own progress on videotape when they re-teach a similar segment).

We also know that we'll lose the respect of the person who is there for help if we try to deny the seriousness of his or her obvious problem. Very few of our participants are self-deluded. Some will, of course, hide the fact that they're at the conference because their deans said they needed it, but they nevertheless know they have problems, and to deny them will result in loss of credibility for the staff member. So I sit there making decisions about how to field others' responses to the one who has just taught for us, how to work my own responses, how to decide when to stop the critique and move on to the next person. Five of us have regularly staffed the microteaching groups each year. Regular staff at the GLCA version of this workshop have included Paul Eichmann (Syracuse University), Peter Frederick (Wabash College), Julie Jeffrey (Goucher College), Oliver Loud (Emeritus, Antioch College), Stephen Scholl (John F. Kennedy University), and myself. There are often one or two new staff rotating in each year. Two vice-presidents of the GLCA (Donn Neal, from 1977 to 1981, and Neil Wylie, since 1982) have been on the scene all week to provide pre-planning, logistical aid, coordination, and help with the equipment. They have acted as floaters, moving from group to group and

helping us with their general impressions of how the week is going. When possible, we have paired up, with two staff members and six participants per group the ideal size. The paired staff provides real advantages — convenience in handling the video equipment, variety in our ways of handling the group.

Although video can be used successfully in many different ways of microteaching, the pattern we have found most successful is the following: Say it's Wednesday morning and we have an ideal group size. One of us asks for volunteers and we list the order in which people will teach that morning (it's reassuring to them to know precisely when they'll perform).

The first participant might begin by telling the group what he or she wants us to look for (for example, "I'd like to know whether I seem to be talking down to you," or "Does it bother you that I keep jumping up to write on the board?") Others, however, will ask only for general impressions. Next, the person teaches his or her five-minute segment. One staff member works the camera and times the segment and rewinds and replays. Then, the one who has just taught has the chance to respond first, and the responses vary greatly. People comment both on the actual teaching segment and the replay. Some are shocked by what they see. One man got tears in his eyes and said of his own segment, "I wouldn't take a course from that man." In such a situation, the staff member has to work hard and fast to turn what could be a defeating experience into a salvageable one. Most of the time, the responses are far less dramatic — though seeing oneself on tape for the first time is a shock for almost everyone.

After the teacher has given his/her responses to the segment, everyone jumps in. Allowing for the teaching, rewind, replay, and critique time, we spent anywhere from twenty to forty minutes on each participant, and the greatest flexibility and judgment are required so that we don't overload the teacher or too greatly intimidate the one who is to teach next.

With each new participant, staff members switch roles so that while one is doing the camera work, the other is asking the right questions and taking notes, for example, copying down for the teacher what everyone else is saying during the discussion, or creating a sheet divided into two columns, the first headed, "What I Heard," the

second, "How I Reacted." We find that participants usually appreciate something in writing since in their nervousness and self-consciousness and concentration at the time of their presentations, they don't always remember or remember accurately what was said to them.

Our participants don't usually require coddling, but I try to suggest in the above that one of our tasks as staff is to minimize their anxiety as they work (often at real personal risk) to improve their teaching. In the afternoons we sometimes have course design sessions and we sometimes have free time, but staff needs to use that time to ensure that the people in their groups have not been overly troubled by the morning session, that they don't exaggerate their weaknesses and forget the many real strengths they displayed.

If I have made microteaching sound hazardous, I meant to. But let me stress as well that for most participants it is a rewarding and sometimes even elating experience. I've suggested above the multiple dangers, but we usually find that by the second time each member of the group has taught, people are relaxed, encouraged by what they see in themselves and their colleagues, and more than eager to try still another segment of teaching.

So the week progresses, the sessions on course design gradually replaced by lengthy microteaching sessions, free time spent on syllabi, meetings of special interest groups, volleyball games and other kinds of recreation, and conferences with members of the staff. Everyone is expected to have individual sessions with a staff member both early and later in the week, the first perhaps to discuss progress with course design, the second a conversation about a personal teaching concern or a particular discipline-linked issue.

Mid-Week (Course) Evaluation

On Wednesday we conduct a mid-week evaluation. Each staff member spends about twenty minutes each with three or four participants (ones they haven't had much time to talk with), putting three questions to them: 1) What's going well? 2) What's not going well? 3) What can we do about it? We use this method of evaluation to suggest to them the importance of their conducting a similar (i.e. mid-term) evaluation of their own courses, asking for suggestions at

a time in the semester or quarter when there is still the possibility for modification. We also, quite practically, conduct the evaluation to find out how we are doing and what needs to be improved for this particular workshop group. Suggestions might include more free time, more salads at meals, more blankets, fewer evening sessions, adding a new topic. (Rarely is there a request for less microteaching.) We take notes as we interview, then we collate the suggestions criticisms praise, and report back to the group that evening, altering the schedule in light of the information we've received.

Evening Sessions

Evening (and an occasional early afternoon) have afforded us opportunity to do mini-workshops. Over the years, one-and-a-half hour sessions on student learning styles and on involving students in the classroom have become more and more successful. In the first we used David Kolb's Learning Style Inventory as the basis for a Piagetian "learning cycle" which includes both identification of participants' own styles and generation of activities that will engage various cognitive styles found among college students (see the article describing this exercise in this volume of readings).

In the later mini-workshop we begin with two groups of 9-12 playing a "mystery game" borrowed from Bette Ericksen which focuses on discussion group dynamics and styles of participation and leadership. Then we have each group brainstorm techniques to involve students in the classroom (producing well over fifty suggestions each time) and share their lists with everyone.

We have also experimented with mini-workshops on stages of student development (primarily applications of William Perry's work), testing and grading, student evaluation of instructors, and personal and professional development problems, including gender issues. The latter has been problematic, and none of these is yet fully satisfactory to us nor consistently well accepted by participants. So the list of sessions changes every time we offer the workshop.

Drawing to a Close

On Saturday morning, as the workshop draws to a close, we have sometimes done a last hour of microteaching or a last special interest session, such as one on testing and evaluation. But increasingly we've had the workshops present their course designs to one another. Invariably, at about 11:30 we come back together for workshop evaluation (written, brief) and what we call re-entry exercises. Earlier that morning we ask certain participants to be in some role-play skits, and we give them a rough idea of what they might do. The scenarios have varied somewhat over the years, but usually we have one in which the workshop-goer returns home to the spouse or (forgive the jargon) "significant other" and blunders as he/she tries to convey the enthusiasm and change the workshop has engendered. The responses are usually both funny and poignant (if some participants find them far-fetched and say so, there will always be others who jump in to say the situation parallels their last night's phone call home; at the very least the skits act as powerful reminders to consider what the week of the person-who-stayed-at-home was like).

In the second segment, the participant checks in with the dean on the home campus to give a report, to convey enthusiasm (or whatever), and to discuss possible faculty development opportunities on the home campus (often the dean is indifferent or preoccupied with this one). Finally, the workshop-goer has a conversation with a close colleague — and once again the message is similar: much of what is experienced at a workshop like this one is unconveyable; insisting on conveying it can lead to frustration. After this comic relief, we ask people to fill out evaluations and then we go to lunch.

What Have we Accomplished?

While microteaching is consistently evaluated as the most valuable thing we offer in the workshop, some people will always object to it. The chief reason given: that 5-7 minute segments are not representative of their teaching or of what they do in the classroom and/or that the situation is an artificial one. Often they seem to speak defensively, wanting to spend their time telling us what they do or would do instead of simply doing it and valuing reactions to it. Others

say microteaching is not helpful because their problems are not five-minute problems. Rather, their concern is tying together the beginning with the end of class, something they don't feel they can simulate in any way of microteaching.

Microteaching can be risky to all and boring and of limited use to some. Yet it can also be an illuminating mini-liberal arts education as we play students to our colleagues in many different disciplines. More important, it works in achieving one of our two major workshop goals — it improves teaching.

And for many it is what they value most and remember best: high risk but extraordinarily reassuring to have taught — and taught well — for one's peers. Furthermore, the benefits can go well beyond increased self-confidence. As one participant wrote: "For me, the microteaching offered powerful illumination of what happens in students' minds while I'm teaching and clear (and not too difficult) ways to IMPROVE what happens there."

For a large portion of the workshop-goers, course design rather than microteaching will be what they valued most. (And for others the private consultations with a staff member will be the highlight of the workshop.) One English professor especially remembers the notion learned in the Sequencing session that he didn't have to offer the material of the course chronologically. In a literature course in twentieth-century British and American fiction, he suddenly realized that he could offer stories from *Dubliners* in different units. Further, he began to see the term not as four class periods a week but as a large but limited number of contact hours that might be utilized in many different ways. What he best remembers is that the course design segment of the workshop taught flexibility, reminded him that we have options we never thought of and options to everything we're currently doing in the classroom.

A chemist from Colorado College similarly valued the course design suggestions he received: "I am still excited about the planning and modifications of the course, so that the original inspiration has carried me a long way. It has also carried over into the designing and planning of other courses... I might almost say that it has carried over to the planning for all of the different courses that I teach."

One year a participant wrote: "First among the workshop's strengths was the integration of the two goals, course design and teaching styles/strategies.... Very early the participants saw the staff members were committed to fresh thinking about teaching without being wedded to a single teaching 'ideology'... They understood that a supportive milieu is crucial for experimenting." This supportiveness helps even the rookie teacher, and we have met great enthusiasm from new teachers. A young biologist who came to the workshop the summer BEFORE she was to take her new job at Goucher College writes, "The workshop was able to take me from feeling like a total novice to feeling fairly confident at beginning a teaching career. It seemed to work pretty well also for people who had taught many years already. This leads me to believe I might have taught for ten years and never come up with a lot of the ideas we shared."

As the above testimonial suggests, year after year we realize that participants learn more from one another than they do from us. An economist at St. Olaf College says it best: "Talking and working with a group of people just like yourself, yet different, is one of the most rewarding things we can experience, While this is one of the things that is supposed to happen regularly in small colleges, it seems to happen all too seldom..." Nevertheless, we as staff recognize that WE establish the conditions for this rewarding dialogue. We do it by providing proper pacing, congenial workgroups, provocative content, useful evaluations of teaching, sensitivity to overload, and flexibility in meeting their needs. Through much trial and error, we have established a model of faculty development that is challenging and rewarding for many college teachers.